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FILE DESIGNATION

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CA-5749

HANDLING INDICATOR

NO.

TO : Amembassy TEL AVIV

INFO: Amembassy BEIRUT
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USUN NEW YORK

FROM : Department of State

SUBJECT : USS LIBERTY claim

REF : Tel Aviv 3456

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR

REVIEWED BY G. W. Rags DATE Oct 22DATE 1 24 PM '69RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH.

REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐DECLASSIFIED/RELEASABLE ☐RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOJ EXEMPTIONS

NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Davies raised the remaining USS LIBERTY claim for damage to the ship with Michael Elizur, Director of the North America Department, Israel Foreign Ministry, during the latter's call at the Department October 10. Mr. Davies indicated that since all other USS LIBERTY claims have been settled, we believe that Israel should now respond to our note presenting the claim for damage to the ship, which dates from July 1968. We had understood that the matter would be discussed during Assistant Director General Moshe Bitan's visit to the United States, but a suitable opportunity did not arise.

Mr. Elizur said it was his government's impression that the two governments had arrived at a tacit understanding that the claim for damage to the ship would be held in abeyance indefinitely. Mr. Davies replied that, on the contrary, United States agencies were still awaiting a reply from the Government of Israel. This expectation remains unchanged even though the USS LIBERTY class ships are being decommissioned by the Navy.

Mr. Elizur suggested that Embassy Tel Aviv pursue the matter directly with Mr. Bitan, since he (Mr. Elizur) will not return to Israel until early November. Mr. Davies replied that early November would be soon enough, and indicated his hope that Mr. Elizur would raise the question in the Foreign Ministry upon his return to Israel.

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Initials:

Drafted by: L/C ELKerley : 10/15/69 : 1714 : NEA/IAI:ALATHERTON, JR.Clearance: Navy: Cdr. R. C. Smith (subs) : RS(EK) : Mr. Davies : 10/17/69

NEA/IAI:ALATHERTON, JR.

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Navy: Cdr. R. C. Smith (subs)

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ACTION REQUESTED:

The Embassy should follow up the Department's approach by raising the claim with Bitan and Elizur after Elizur returns, in order to elicit a reply from the Government of Israel. In keeping with our policy of making all information relevant to the USS LIBERTY claims available to the Government of Israel, the Embassy should indicate that this class of ship is being decommissioned but that no decision has been made regarding scrapping of the vessels.

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